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NAACP
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NAACP, NEAC PRESENTATION BEFORE THE DTE
August 16, 2006

Good morning, and thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Juan Cofield. I am the president of the New England Area Conference of the NAACP.

The NAACP is the largest and most revered civil rights organization in the country. It is also highly regarded as an advocate for the less privileged and disenfranchised. That is why I am here to discuss the importance of affordable access to new technology for all consumers.

People who have no affordable access to the internet, cable TV and telecom services are at a disadvantage. These resources not only provide knowledge – they also provide opportunity.

In this information age, television especially has become an increasingly powerful link to opportunity. It delivers educational services, news, and entertainment. TV links people to the community and the marketplace.

However, in Massachusetts, cable companies have a virtual TV monopoly. As a result, most consumers are captive to rising cable prices and sometimes, even poor customer service. Aside from the price considerations, consumers also have less access to video programming options – an important issue to diverse communities.

Existing regulations harm consumers who want to save money, have better access to technology and video service choices. I am here to ask the DTE to change its regulations to allow new companies to bring cable competition into our communities faster.

Changing the process to provide a competitive environment will offer greater choice, regardless of where customers live, and more competitive pricing and better service.

Thank you for the opportunity to share the views of the New England Area Conference of the NAACP with you today.


Juan M. Cofield, President